

# MHR *Connections*

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*While Women's History Month celebrated the contribution of women artists to social change, the entertainment was dance. The event took place at the Manitoba Legislative Building and featured dance performances choreographed by Stephanie Ballard and performed by students from The School of Contemporary Dancers Professional Program and the Drive Dance Company. Here, dancers lined the grand staircase as the many visitors came and went. More on this story on page 2.*

## Is your workplace an award winner?

Workplaces can be tough for some employees. On the other hand, some employers and unions go out of the way to create an inclusive and diverse workplace.

This year the Manitoba Human Rights Commission, the Canadian Human Rights Commission and the Association for Rights and Liberties will recognize one of those workplaces with the 2011 Human Rights Commitment Award of Manitoba.

"We know there are some very diverse and inclusive workplaces that employ or train people who have experienced historical disadvantage," says Dianna Scarth, Executive Director of the Manitoba Human Rights Commission. "This year we would like to recognize their achievements," she adds.

The 2011 Sybil Shack Human Rights Youth Award will recognize a youth group or young person who has promoted respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms within Manitoba.

The deadline for nominations is 5:00 pm Thursday, November 10, 2011. The awards will be presented,

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THE MANITOBA  
HUMAN RIGHTS  
COMMISSION



LA COMMISSION DES  
DROITS DE LA PERSONNE  
DU MANITOBA

[www.manitoba.ca/hrc](http://www.manitoba.ca/hrc)

The Rights Connection  
by Jerry Woods, Chairperson

### People talk about racism at town hall meeting

Earlier this month I was honoured to be a guest in the audience of a National Town Hall Meeting hosted by the Aboriginal People's Network, APTN. It was carried live on television and streamed live on the internet. The topic was Racism: Let's talk about it. I hope people watched and listened.

It was a rewarding experience because not enough of us actually talk about racism. One of the things we discussed was children who are subjected to racism. They know that something is wrong but cannot quite figure out what it is. They begin to believe that there is something wrong with them. As adults we are asked questions that we are expected to answer.

That is why I believe that events like the APTN Town Hall Meeting are important. It is the Aboriginal way. We come together, we listen to each other, we tell our stories and we gain strength from each other. This strength we pass on to our children. This is fundamental. We must respect ourselves and, within our own culture, respect each other.

We talked also about systemic racism. It became clear that we all feel it. But what can we do? Who among us can change who we are, even if we wanted to, no matter how hard we try? We are who we are. And that refers to anyone who has been subject to discrimination, whether the basis of it is ancestry, disability, sex, religion, age or sexual orientation.

One woman in the audience spoke of being raised "non-Indian," as she put it. She explained that when she was a child in the fifties she was ashamed to be Aboriginal. Now she finds strength in others, in education and in her own spirituality. As she put it, "They tried to take the Indian out of us, but it didn't work. A lot of us found our way back, partly anyway. I sometimes still feel ashamed and I have to work at it and probably will all my life." For her, racism is a life sentence.

As adults, who among us wants to sentence our children to a life of racism or the shame that accompanies it?

*Jerry Woods is from the Couchiching First Nation.*

# Women honoured for art and social change

It was all about women who have excelled in art, whether in images, words or sound. The 2011 Women's History Month was celebrated at the Manitoba Legislative Building and



*Three of the artists honoured, (from left to right) Hope McIntyre, Jaime Black and Leah Decter listen as keynote speaker Shawna Dempsey congratulates the artists "for transforming our world and showing a path forward."*

honoured eight women artists in Manitoba whose art has changed the lives of women, families and communities.

The honourees included Cecilia Araneda for her work in media arts; celebrated craft artist Teresa Burrows; Roewan Crowe for her work

in the literary arts; Leah Decter for her accomplishments in the visual arts; accomplished dancer Buffy Handel; Ingrid D. Johnson for her work as an activist and noted singer; Hope McIntyre for her achievements in the performing arts; and Jaime Black, honoured as an emerging multi-disciplinary youth artist.

Key note speaker was multi-disciplinary artist Shawna Dempsey, who is known for her work in performance art, video, film and print. She is also co-executive director of Mentoring Artists for Women's Art (MAWA).

She congratulated the artists for their extraordinary work and asked the audience to support art education by encouraging everyone to "write a letter, make a phone call so that our collective voice can be heard and art education at school is not an extracurricular or a paid-for activity."

She also asked everyone to financially support female artists and revealed statistics that show female artists make only 58% of what a male artists earn.

At the celebration, Labour and Immigration Minister Jennifer Howard, minister responsible for the status of women introduced the publication *Women in the Arts: Artists Working for Social Change* that highlights the contributions of these eight women. Copies of the publication are available from the Manitoba Status of Women Division by phone at 204-945-6281 or 1-800-263-0234 (toll-free), by email at [msw@gov.mb.ca](mailto:msw@gov.mb.ca) or online at [www.gov.mb.ca/msw](http://www.gov.mb.ca/msw)

## UPDATE

Keynote Speaker  
Announced  
Are we there yet?  
June 17 - 19, 2012  
Winnipeg MB  
[www.cashra.ca](http://www.cashra.ca)

## 2012 CASHRA Human Rights Conference



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in celebration of International Human Rights Day, at a reception to be held at Kum Koon Garden Restaurant in Winnipeg, on December 8, 2011.

Recipients of the Human Rights Commitment Award of Manitoba (formerly the Human Rights Achievement Award) and the Sybil Shack Human Rights Youth Award are given a Certificate of Achievement and \$500.00. Every year, in recognition of International Human Rights Day, the Manitoba Human Rights Commission, the Canadian Human Rights Commission and the Manitoba Association for Rights and Liberties acknowledge human rights work that has advanced the rights of Manitobans by recognizing individuals and groups.

Tickets are sold through the Manitoba Human Rights Commission, the Canadian Human Rights Commission and the Manitoba Association for Rights and Liberties. Information about these awards can also be found on MARL's website (<http://www.marl.mb.ca>)

To view a list of past recipients, please visit our website and click on "Awards" under Public Education.

## Spaces are available for three upcoming Human Rights Commission Workshops

### Harassment in the Workplace

- o November 10, 2011
- o 8:30am - 12:30pm
- o Cost \$125.00 (lunch included)

### How to Investigate a Human Rights Complaint (A two day workshop)

- o Tuesday, November 22 and Thursday November 24, 2011
- o 8:30am - 4:30pm
- o Cost \$225.00 (lunch included)

### Reasonable Accommodation in the Workplace

- o December 1, 2011
- o 8:30am - 12:30pm
- o Cost \$125.00 (lunch included)

**In the New Year, these same workshops are almost filled to capacity.**

For details on workshop content, call Sheilagh Hooper at 945-3009 in Winnipeg; toll free 1-888-884-8681 or visit: <http://www.manitobahumanrights.ca/workshops.html>  
Online registration is available.

## Keynote Speaker

### Dr. Samantha Nutt

Dr. Samantha Nutt's riveting new book, *Damned Nations*, is a bracing and uncompromising account of her work in some of the most devastated regions of the world.